1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba

THE LAUAN AS AN INDIVIDUAL

INFANCY

There is no word for baby in the Fijian language, only for a small child. The baby sleeps with its mother until eighteen months or two years old.

Women shape the child's head to be round (*vatu vinaka*) by placing a bit of cloth in their hands and pressing the head with it. This is usually done by the grandmother, who plays a large part in caring for the baby. Formerly ladies had nurses who fed the child and carried it about. They were paid by the father and received a share in any festival.

Most Fijian babies appear very helpless and apathetic. They are suckled until a late age, about eighteen months to two years. While some children are strong and grow fast, "the body hurries and disease seizes it." Fijian children sit alone at five months, crawl at six to seven months; at seven months they raise the knee; at eight, begin to stand up. Some toddle at eleven to twelve months, some much later. Their speech develops in proportion with their actions.

A Lauan baby is never crossed unless it is absolutely necessary; on the other hand, little is done to amuse it. The babies seldom laugh, or even smile.

CHILDHOOD

Discipline

Boys sleep with the mother until nine or ten years of age, when they sleep in the young men's quarters (*mbure*).

Children take to clothing by degrees and at their own discretion, especially the boys; the girls soon take to little gowns because they are not so easily thrown off. Boys even at the age of ten or eleven often discard their cloth when running, but gradually accept it as permanent apparel, though wearing it as short as possible, or as a loin cloth between the legs when running.

The hair of babies is closely cropped, that of older children is allowed to grow into many curious fashions—a mop on the top of the head, a coxcomb from forehead to poll. About the age of ten, many boys wear a broad tuft called *tombe* on the forehead, the remainder of the head being cropped close. At about the thirteenth or fourteenth year, the hair is allowed to grow uniformly, and becomes the object of increasing care. Little girls sometimes have their hair cropped except for a little tuft on the prominence on each side of the head.

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844 Of old everyone knew if a boy was born because the ladies sang a song
535 called *thongge* (*thongge* is a bird that sits on a stone and cries *u, u*).

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Ko thongge ni sa roaroa[a]	*Thongge* when it is morning flies
E vuka mai ka mai toka	hither and perches; its voice
Mai tekuru toka a ndomona,	cooes, then drops and hums
Ka lutu ka ndengu: "*mm*";	"Mm," and the *thongge* laughs:
Ka ndrendre a thongge: 'e i ai i'.	"*E i ai i.*"

There is no song for a girl. Nowadays there is no joking (*vakatasuasua*) at birth.

846 Both the mother and the child are rubbed with oil and turmeric powder that "the milk may smell it and be plentiful." Oiling the mother is no longer practiced, and so *kulakula*, a disease in which the skin turns red, is common. Candlenut is pressed on the child's lips to make it vomit, that the evil thing may come out which was in its inside when it was born,
853 that it may be clean. It is fed with coconut juice: the coconut is baked, chewed, and the juice spat on to a clean piece of bark cloth and given to the child to suck. If the child wants to vomit they rub its lips with a China banana to make it vomit outright. When the mother has milk they set aside the coconut.

846 When the news is known ladies come in numbers to stay with the mother ten to twenty nights. This assembly is called *songone*. The father has to provide food for them daily.

At some time, it is not clear when, the father comes to kiss his child and rejoice over it. If the mother be a lady, bark cloth and as much as twenty or thirty mats are brought for her to lie upon. Of the two sides, father's and mother's, one provides the couch for the mother, the other for the child. On the day of the birth (occasionally a day or two after) both sides provide a big feast which is taken to the house where the mother is lying in. The assembly of women has the disposal of the feast. The father also makes a raw feast called *mba*, taro stems. Formerly they carried the baskets slung on muskets; nowadays on spades; these are called "the carrying sticks of the taro stems" and were given with the taro to the mother's side.

After four nights the women go to fish "to make free the nursing mother." Until that time all food from the sea is forbidden (p. 163). A big feast is then prepared called *isilisili ndrawu*, which means "to wash away the ashes," or to "wash in ashes." The two sides hold a potlatch in which each side takes its gifts to the house of the other. This is called "dragging backwards and forwards" (*veiyarayaki*). Whatever the number of gifts brought from one side, the other will bring an equal amount.

[a] The word *roaroa* is not Lauan.

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

has died. A shallow hole in the sand is dug by hand, with a stick, or with a large shell. Usually nuts are transplanted at sunset. Natives say that if the planter carries someone, preferably a young boy, on his back while planting, the tree will bear more fruit. Trees on the leeward side of the island are sturdier than those on the windward side. The best harvests are gathered from trees between 10 and 60 years of age.

Good qualities in a coconut are considered by Lauans to be a thin husk and a thin shell to admit the sun, which sweetens milk and growing meat.

Ono has the reputation for having the best flavored coconuts, Lakemba for the greatest quantity of nuts. The soil of Kambara is a little too sandy for coconuts. The trees growing on Ndelaioloi are said to bring forth the largest number and the best fruit on the island. Mothe has many coconuts. On Fulanga and Ongea the trees are small and do not bear so well as on the other islands. Namuka has large groves, but many trees are unhealthy.

There are several coconut pests. *Mate ni niu* (coconut death) is caused by the purple moth (*Levuana iridescens*) and is greatly feared. The branches of the tree turn rust brown or black, drop, and the tree dies. In recent years the colonial government has sent an insect-eating fly (*Ptychomyia remota*) imported from the Malay States, to the infected islands and the pest is rapidly retreating. Coconut crabs, of which there are many on Wangava, break the nuts on the ground and eat them or leave them to spoil. On Komo, a rat is said to climb the tree and "eat" the young nuts. Some coconut trees are killed by a fern which grows in the branch fork.

Every part of the coconut tree is used. Coconut oil is indispensable. Copra is still used in limited quantities in exchange for western trade goods, especially tobacco, kerosene, and cloth. The meat is an important food for human beings, pigs, and chickens. It is the first food given to a baby. The milk is drunk and used in preparing fish and greens. The husk is used for sennit and kindling, the wood is used for fuel and is split into roof laths, the leaves are used for baskets, and the midribs of the leaflets for brooms. Whole leaves are made into mats for house walls, floor mats, and thatch. The root is used as medicine and the reticulum serves as a medicine bag. The spathes make the best torches. The branches are used in fishing, and the elastic thick middle rib, freed of its foliage, is used as a lash.

The harvest of nuts for copra is picked off the ground by women. Several nuts are carried on one arm pressed against the body and one nut is carried in the free hand of the other arm. They are placed in a row on the path or thrown into an enclosure fenced with vertically placed sticks. The nuts are split by kneeling women, the meat poked out with a stick, shell, or cane knife and put into baskets. It is then placed on boards, usually on the beach outside the grove, to dry.

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Kambara

844 soon as the child is born the mother is given a second drink of medicine to bring forth the afterbirth. If it does not appear the mother's abdomen is pressed and the cord is pulled.

The newborn infant is held over a bowl of luke warm water and washed by the midwife or the grandmother. He is rubbed with powdered mangrove root. He is wrapped in white barkcloth so that only his face is exposed, and is held by the grandmother until he falls asleep. A child's bed, composed of a pile of baby mats and soft barkcloth, is prepared. Then the infant is placed "on the mat", that is, he is put on the pile.

846 After the delivery, while still sitting on the stone, the mother is washed with fresh water. Then she lies down on a new mat. She is rubbed with powdered mangrove root and covered with a sheet of barkcloth. She does not bathe in the sea for four days and remains quiet from five to ten days. She eats the roasted flesh of ripe coconut. The natives say she must not eat the flesh from the pointed end, however, because that flesh will poke into her stomach and cause pain. She drinks much coconut milk, but the pointed end of the nut must first be taken off, otherwise the baby will vomit. Also she must not eat salt.

853 Until the mother's milk appears the baby is usually fed roasted ripe coconut flesh. The flesh is chewed by the grandmother or the mother and spat into a piece of white barkcloth. The wad is dipped in warm water and given to the infant to suck. Babies are also fed the juice of sugar cane. Warm powdered mangrove root is applied to the breasts of a woman confined for the first time, to facilitate the flow of milk.

844 The afterbirth and cord are wrapped in the piece of barkcloth on which the birth took place, and buried by the husband or the midwife at the threshold of a door of the house. According to an old woman of Kambara, this is to give the child "good breath". A woman of Fulanga said it was so buried to be stepped upon but she did not know why.

000 If the child is born dead the body is kept near the mother

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the help of the girls, prepare the greens by removing the leaves from the stems, and attend to the boiling.

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Mother and child are practically inseparable. The mother rarely goes out of the village, but spends most of her time with other women in one of the kitchen houses of her clan, her baby on her lap or close beside her. Sometimes she strolls leisurely through the village to see a relative, her infant slung on her back or over one hip in a piece of cloth or barkcloth, which has been slipped under one arm and over the opposite shoulder and knotted over the chest. The mother plays with her baby, talks to him, and pets him. Long before the child is able to stand she amuses herself by propping him up against her breasts, his feet on her lap. Moving his little body rhythmically in imitation of the dance, she chants to him. She calls him "little pig" and sings lullabies to put him to sleep. At night the child sleeps beside her on the mat.

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The mother usually suckles the baby whenever he cries, which may be three or four times in one hour. He is allowed to nurse as long as he cares to. If she is sitting with flexed legs crossed in front she lays the child across her lap. While sucking her right breast he is supported by her right arm, her left hand upholding the lower end of her breast. During the process of nursing the mother often rocks the child by rhythmically moving the flexed leg on which he rests. If she is lying down she lays the child beside and facing her, places the sling she uses for carrying him in a wad under his head, and gives him her breast. The child is not interrupted to change breasts nor is the breast withdrawn until he rejects it. The weaning process is gradual and without shock to the child. At the age of three or four months he is fed baked papaw or raw mango, usually half-ripe, in a casual fashion. Now and then bits of baked sweet potato or breadfruit are slipped into his mouth. Gradually he eats more and more solid food until, at the age of about one year he is fully weaned. I did not observe any child sucking his thumb.

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